

Strategy Research Project International Fellow

Japan's Defense Program Guidelines

by

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United States Army War College
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Abstract

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Japan has a constitutional limitation (Article 9) that prohibits some kinds of military activity. Nonetheless, Japan requires a modern, effective defense capability. Emerging China is major security concern for Japan in the future. Regional ethnic and religious disputes and unrest may have a global impact, affecting Japan's security and well being. Japan also faces "gray zone" disputes that are unlikely to escalate into war, but which threaten Japan's security. This paper will examine the geopolitical, military, domestic, and international environment and will recommend a defense program to protect Japan's security while adhering to the provisions of Article 9. These recommendations include explicitly identifying Japan's values as a national interest, increasing Japan's participation in international stability efforts, and maintaining a balanced defense structure to deal with gray zone disputes.

Japan's Defense Program Guidelines

Introduction

The primary formal restraint on Japanese remilitarization has always been Article 9 of the U.S. - imposed constitution. As Richard J. Samuels pointed out, Japan has a constitutional limitation that prohibits some kinds of military activity.¹ After the outbreak of the Korean War, Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida's government created a heavily-armed, 75,000-man National Police Reserves, which has since successfully developed into an effective defense force with wide support from the nation, in spite of debate concerning the interpretation of Article 9. Today, arguments have begun in Japan over the issue of institutional change. But institutional change requires a complicated procedure and takes a long time. It is hard to believe that the basic principles of Japan's security will dramatically change, even if institutional change becomes the reality. These principles are described in the National Defense Program Guidelines:

In line with basic principles such as maintaining an exclusively defense-oriented policy and not becoming a military power that poses a threat to other countries, Japan will continue to uphold its basic defense policies, such as securing civilian control, maintaining the three non-nuclear principles, and building a modest defense force.²

On the other hand, there have been significant changes inside and outside of Japan. For example, the security environment surrounding Japan is dramatically changing. So-called "gray-zone" disputes — confrontations over territory, sovereignty and economic interests— have been escalating. Moreover, the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 caused catastrophic damage to Japan and brought changes to the consciousness of the Japanese people.

This paper will evaluate the current defense program guidelines, taking into consideration the influence of the above new factors, and will recommend a defense program guideline to protect Japan's security while adhering to the provisions of Article 9.

Background

Constitutional Limitation

Since the end of World War II, Japan has adhered to the 1947 Constitution, of which Article 9 renounces war, the possession of war potential, and the right of belligerency by the state.³ These provisions do not deny Japan's inherent right of self-defense as a sovereign state. However, the Japanese Government believes that the exercise of the right of collective self-defense is not permissible. Japan is permitted to possess the minimum necessary level of self-defense capability, but possession of armaments deemed to be offensive weapons or designed to be used only for the mass destruction of another country exceed the minimum necessary level.

Under the Constitution, a Basic Policy for National Defense was adopted by the National Defense Council and approved by the Cabinet in 1957.⁴ The national defense objectives provided in the Basic Policy for National Defense are to prevent direct and indirect invasions of Japan and, if Japan is invaded, to defend the country and thus protect the independence and peace of Japan as a democratic nation.⁵

In addition, in 1987, Japan made a Cabinet decision on "the Future Buildup of the Defense Force," and declared other basic policies as follows:

- Exclusively defense-oriented policy.
- Not becoming a military power that threatens other countries.
- Ensuring civilian control.

- The Three Non-Nuclear Principles.⁶
- Firmly maintaining the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements.

Since the Basic Policy was adopted, there has not been a single modification of the document. This means that the Policy provides general guidance that does not have to be modified according to changes in national security policy, but also does not provide substantial guidance in setting Japan's national security politics. Furthermore, the fundamental problem of this policy is that it does not explicitly describe Japan's national interests to be defended. This makes it difficult to explain why the Japan-U.S. Alliance is vital and why the United Nations is important to Japan's national security. For these reasons, it is also difficult to address inside and outside of Japan exactly how Japan should meet its strategic challenges.

History of the National Defense Program Guidelines

The National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) set forth the basic policies for Japan's security, as well as a basic guideline for Japan's defense force in the future, including the significance and role of Japan's defense force, the specific organization of the Self Defense Force (SDF), and the target levels of major defense equipment to be built up.⁷ After 1976, Japan developed its defense force based on four versions of the NDPG (From 1958 to 1975, Japan developed its defense force based on four versions of defense development programs.). The first NDPG for FY1977 and beyond (1976 NDPG) was approved by the National Defense Council and the Cabinet in October 1976. The characteristics of that NDPG were that it incorporated "the Basic Defense Force Concept" to guide the defense program and to clarify the level of defense force that the country ought to maintain. The Basic Defense Force Concept was formulated in the context of the détente in the 1970s, was focused on preventing invasions to Japan,

and was centered on the deterrence effect. The 1976 NDPG set forth the following as the defense capabilities that Japan should have:

- To be equipped with the various functions required for defense,
- To focus on keeping a balanced posture with regard to organization and equipment, including the logistics support organization;
- To be on full alert even during peacetime, and at the same time,
- To be able to handle situations up to limited and small-scale invasions effectively, and
- When the situation escalates and a new defense posture is needed, to be able to make a smooth transition to the necessary state of defense.

The second NDPG for FY1996 and beyond (1995 NDPG) was drawn up approximately 20 years after the 1976 NDPG. It was formulated after consideration of rising expectations for the role of the SDF in view of significant changes in international relations such as the end of the Cold War, U.N. peacekeeping operations, and responses to the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Disaster (magnitude was 7.3; about 6,500 people were lost). In 1995, the government reviewed the scale and functions of defense capabilities set forth in the NDPG while it continued the Basic Defense Force Concept.

The third NDPG for FY 2005 and beyond (2004 NDPG) was formulated to respond to new threats and a multitude of issues, such as the increasing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, as well as activities by international terrorist organizations. The 2004 NDPG put a stronger emphasis on “response

capability,” than on “deterrence effects,” while retaining the effective parts of the basic Defense Force Concept.⁸

The 2004 NDPG described the security environment surrounding Japan as this: “The United States, as the sole superpower, continues to contribute significantly to international peace and stability by taking active measures to combat and to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.”⁹ The current NDPG for FY 2011 and beyond (2010 NDPG) was completed for the first time under the former Democratic Party government. The 2010 NDPG lays out a new concept of “Dynamic Defense Forces,” focusing on the operation of defense forces in consideration of the current security environment. The 2010 NDPG is explained in detail in the next section.

As described above, Japan’s government developed its defense force based on four versions of the NDPG. Nevertheless, it limited the size of the SDF by imposing a fiscal ceiling of 1.0% of Japan’s gross national product (GNP) on defense expenditures in 1976. This limitation was abolished in 1987, but the defense budget is generally still restrained to within 1.0 % of the gross domestic product (GDP).¹⁰ Although both the 2004 and 2010 NDPGs evaluated the security environment surrounding Japan as being complicated and uncertain, defense budgets have continuously declined from fiscal year 2002. The NDPGs were approved by the National Defense Council and the Cabinet. However, the government has not provided sufficient funding to assure Japan’s security.

The characteristics of the 2010 NDPG were that it attached greater importance to regions south of Japan that affect the global balance of power, especially the growing power of China. Consequently, the government developed a new basic concept,

“Dynamic Defense Force,” which focused on operations in response to the changes in the security environment.

Security Environment Surrounding Japan

The 2010 NDPG explained that the probability of large-scale war between major countries has declined, but other sorts of risks are growing, and it predicted changes in the power balance in the Asia-Pacific regions.

But there is now a growing risk that the impact of unrest or a security problem in a single country will immediately spread worldwide. Moreover, in addition to regional conflicts arising from ethnic and religious disputes, there are growing number of so-called “gray-zone” disputes--- confrontations over territory, sovereignty and economic interest that are not to escalate into wars.

In such an environment, we are witnessing a global shift in the balance of power with the rise of powers such as China, India and Russia, along with the relative change of influence of the United States.¹¹

The “gray-zone” dispute is the new concept that is used in the 2010 NDPG for the first time. “Gray-zone” means that the dispute is unlikely to escalate into war, such as a large-scale landing invasion, but nonetheless threatens Japan’s security. The 2010 NDPG also took into consideration challenges faced by the international community, such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, international terrorist organizations, and piracy. In addition, it warned of new risks concerning sustained access to the seas, outer space, and cyberspace.

The 2010 NDPG individually described North Korea, China, and Russia in more detail than the 2004 NDPG and tried to explain the unpredictable and uncertain elements surrounding Japan. As for China, the 2010 NDPG accepted that China is beginning to play an increasingly important role for regional and global security, but expressed concern about China’s growing defense expenditures, rapidly modernizing

military forces, nuclear and missile forces, as well as naval and air forces, and growing extended-range power projection. The 2010 NDPG concluded that the security challenges and destabilizing factors facing Japan are diverse, complex, and intertwined. Thus, Japan needs to appropriately deal with various contingencies arising from such challenges and factors.

Basic Principles of Japan's Security Policy; Dynamic Defense Force

Japan's Security policy consists of three pillars: Japan's own efforts, cooperation with its U.S. ally, and multi-layered security cooperation with the international community. These three pillars are about the same as those in the 2004 NDPG.¹² However, in the first pillar, Japan's own effort, the 2010 NDPG came out with the new concept, "Dynamic Defense Force." The 2010 NDPG explained this as follows, "a Dynamic Defense Force that possesses readiness, mobility, flexibility, sustainability, and versatility. These characteristics will be reinforced by advanced technology based on the trends of levels of military technology and intelligence capabilities."¹³ According to the *Defense of Japan 2011*, which was published the year after the 2010 NDPG was approved, the concept of defense capabilities consists of three elements:

- Conduct regular activities, such as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, constantly, continuously, and strategically.
- Respond to emergencies promptly and seamlessly.
- Implement cooperative activities on multiple levels.

This concept is still equivocal, and there is more work to be done. As the Basic Defense Force Concept had been refined through the three NDPGs, it needs to be examined continuously. Nevertheless, under the change of power balance in the Asia-Pacific region, this concept indicates Japan's new orientation.

Other Key Points of the 2010 NDPG

Response to Attacks on Off-shore Islands:

The 2010 NDPG recognizes invasion of Japan's off-shore islands, cyber attacks, guerilla warfare, Special Operation Force attacks, ballistic missile attacks, multiple contingencies, and diverse large-scale disasters as expected threats in areas surrounding Japan. While responding to those threats, the challenge Japan faces is how to fill the strategic vacuum stretching over 1,400km from Kyushu to Yonaguni Island, which is the westernmost island in Japan. The 2010 NDPG specified that the SDF will enhance its defense posture, including in the southwestern region.

Participating in International Peace Cooperation Activities:

The 2010 NDPG indicated that Japan should participate in activities to improve the global security environment, including international peace cooperation, in a more efficient and effective manner. Concretely, those activities include peace building, such as humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, ceasefire monitoring, arms control, disarmament, nonproliferation, and support for capacity-building. Moreover, the 2010 NDPG mentioned that Japan will consider how it will participate in future peace-keeping operations by examining current policies, such as the five principles for participation in peace-keeping operations.¹⁴

Consideration of Arms Exports:

The necessity of revision of the Three Principles on Arms Exports was discussed vigorously in the Council on Security and Defense Capabilities, which was held in 2009 at the request of the government. The Council recommended that Japan set a new guideline that directs its arms export control policy.¹⁵ The 2010 NDPG did not revise the Three Principles on Arms Exports, but clarified the significance of defense

equipment in terms of arms exports and initiated a study of measures to respond to changes in the international environment.

The Evaluation of the 2010 NDPG

The NDPG provides the vision for Japan's Defense Forces for approximately the next decade. If there are significant changes in circumstances, Japan will review and, if necessary, revise the Guidelines. Since 2010, two major issues occurred beyond the assumptions of the 2010 NDPG. One was the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. The 2010 NDPG emphasized the necessity for the Self Defense Force to respond to complex contingencies, but disasters of that magnitude were not included among those contingencies.¹⁶ The 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake presented the SDF with a complex contingency of earthquake, tsunami, nuclear disaster, and scrambles against foreign aircraft. The other issue is the security environment surrounding Japan. The 2010 NDPG predicted the growing number of so-called "gray-zone" disputes – confrontations over territory, sovereignty and economic interests that are not likely to escalate into war but which threaten Japan's security. However, Japan's security environment may change from gray to black (likely to escalate into war) due to instability caused by uncontrolled nationalism, ethnic and religious disputes, and other regional crises with global implications. Thus, so-called "gray-zone" disputes are very serious and potentially dangerous.

The Great East Japan Earthquake

On March 11, 2011, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake occurred in the Tohoku region, the largest observed in Japanese history. The massive tsunami triggered by the earthquake inflicted catastrophic damage. To make matters worse, the tsunami damaged the nuclear reactors at the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima

Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, causing a radiation leak. The combination of these widespread and immensely damaging incidents made this the largest major disaster in Japanese history.¹⁷

In response to the Great East Japan Earthquake, the SDF engaged in disaster dispatch activities, such as search and rescue operations, rescue operations for missing persons, transport assistance activities, livelihood assistance activities, emergency rehabilitation assistance activities, and response to the nuclear disaster with maximum personnel numbers exceeding 100,000. In order to strengthen those activities, the SDF established the Joint Task Force-Tohoku (JTF-TH) and mobilized reserves for the first time. In addition, Japan received a lot of assistance from foreign militaries, which was typified by “Operation Tomodachi,” conducted by the U.S. forces.

Through these activities, the SDF tested the Basic Defense Force Concept, such as to be equipped for the various functions required for defense; to focus on keeping a balanced posture of organization, equipment, and effectiveness of the Dynamic Defense Force; and to respond to emergencies promptly and seamlessly. The report of lessons learned from the earthquake experience that was published by the Ministry of Defense (MOD) concludes that the quick response of MOD and joint operations were carried out successfully. However, the capability of force projection, communication, and other capabilities should be strengthened.¹⁸

The earthquake brought some changes in the attitude of the Japanese people about defending the nation. According to the “Public Opinion Survey on the Self-Defense Forces and Defense Issues,”¹⁹ at the time of the Gulf War in 1991, less than 68 percent of the people had a good impression of the SDF. The percentage had gradually

improved, and after the Earthquake more than 91 percent held a good impression. This was an increase of more than 10 percent from the previous survey in January 2009. Those with a negative impression of the SDF fell sharply, from 14 percent to 5 percent, in the same period. With the change of public opinion about the SDF, those who had an interest in the SDF and defense issues amounted to almost 70 percent, 5 percent greater than in 2009. Today, many Japanese people show an interest in defense issues.

Other research says that the percentage of university students who “love Japan” increased after the Earthquake.²⁰ Specifically, 49.1 percent of college students claimed to love Japan strongly (38.9 percent, in 2001), while 46.3 percent of college students love Japan somewhat (49.6 percent, in 2001). Various causes for these changes are conceivable, but the research pointed out the possibility that when the Japanese people encountered an unprecedented national crisis, their nationalism was stimulated, as it was in the United States after the 9/11 crisis. Indeed, current university students identify “patience,” “sense of cooperation,” “courtesy,” and “fellow feeling” as characteristics of the Japanese. They are the Japanese virtues which were praised by the foreign media when the earthquake occurred. In general, a public belief that it is important to defend the country has grown in Japan since the earthquake.

Security Changes Surrounding Japan

As the 2010 NDPG predicted, there have been many “gray-zone” disputes around Japan since 2010. In the north of Japan, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev visited Kunashiri Island in Japan’s Northern Territories in November 2010, and he stated that equipment should be modernized to ensure the security of the “Kuril” Islands.²¹ There also seems to be an increase in Russian aircraft activities such as flights approaching Japan, exercises, and training.²²

On the Korean peninsula, North Korea's "military-first politics" have not changed since the death of Kim Jong-Il. North Korea has continued to develop its ballistic missiles and conducted a successful launch in December 2012 despite a U.N. Security Council Resolution cautioning against such a move. On 12 February 2013, North Korea also conducted another nuclear weapon test in the face of global condemnation of the act. In addition, there is no knowing when North Korea may release Japanese citizens that they have abducted. There are even tensions with the otherwise friendly Republic of Korea (ROK), primarily over the disputed Takeshima Island. ROK President Lee Myung Bak visited Takeshima in August 2012, and a subsequent exchange of criticism caused a rapid deterioration in relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea.

China has been expanding and intensifying its maritime activities in recent years. In March and April 2011, during the operations following the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, there were multiple instances of Chinese helicopters flying close to the Japanese destroyers engaged in vigilance monitoring in the East China Sea. As for the Senkaku Islands, after the announcement of the purchase of the islands by the Japanese Government, anti-Japan protests spread in China, activities by both China and Taiwan near the Senkaku Islands intensified, and China sent its patrol vessels near the islands. In addition, in December 2012 a Chinese airplane violated Japan's airspace over the Senkaku Islands for the first time. These activities are thought to be an expression of the fact that China is aiming at changing the status quo.

Some of these "gray-zone" disputes were not anticipated by the 2010 NDPG, which emphasized the importance of the cooperation of the Republic of Korea in the

Asia-Pacific region: “In particular, Japan will strengthen its cooperation with the Republic of Korea and Australia, which are allies of the United States and share basic values and many security related interests with Japan.”²³ However, the Takeshima issue is a serious obstacle to cooperation. China’s assertiveness in the East China Sea, especially against the Senkaku Islands, is unconcealed and aggressive as has previously been described. These “gray-zone” disputes might be overheated by nationalism, making them extremely difficult to control, and could change from “gray” to “black.”

The heating up of these disputes has affected the sense of closeness of the Japanese people with those countries. According to a public opinion survey on diplomacy taken in October 2012, the percentage of those who feel a sense of closeness to the Republic of Korea has decreased sharply from 62.2 percent to 39.2 percent comparing to a previous survey in October 2011.²⁴ The percentage of those who do not feel a sense of closeness has risen from 35.3 percent to 59.0 percent in the same period. As for the relationship between Japan and the Republic of Korea, 78.8 percent of Japanese people feel that the relationship is not good. In the case of China, the percentage of those who feel a sense of closeness to China has decreased from 26.3 percent to 18.0 percent and those who do not feel a sense of closeness has risen from 71.8 percent to 80.6 percent. As for the relationship between Japan and China, 92.8 percent of Japanese people feel the relationship is not good. These results, for both the Republic of Korea and China, are the worst since 1978. The impression of the Republic of Korea has especially deteriorated remarkably. The research indicates that a sense of closeness to the Republic of Korea (39.2 percent) is lower than that of the

Republic of India (47.0 percent) and other Southeast Asian countries (57.9 percent). On the contrary, the percentage of those who feel a sense of closeness to Russia has risen from 16.2 percent to 19.5 percent.

On the other hand, those countries did not have a good image of Japan, either. According to a British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) survey of "Views of Different Countries' Influence," Japan was rated most positively by 58 percent on average in the 22 countries surveyed. Twenty countries lean positively and only two lean negatively: the Republic of Korea and China. The Republic of Korea has 38 percent of positive views for Japan and 58 percent negative views. China has only 16 percent positive views for Japan and 63 percent negative views. In contrast, Russia has 54 percent of positive views for Japan and 10 percent negative views.²⁵

This situation reminds us of the old adage, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." The theory of geopolitics holds that location and proximity will tell a great deal about how states will behave, because neighbors have more contact and potential points of friction.²⁶ In the third century BCE, the Indian writer Kautiliya described the geopolitical situation as a checkerboard of alternating red and black squares – hostile and friendly countries. The current situation of East Asia increasingly resembles Kautiliya's checkerboard.

The 2010 NDPG evaluated the security environment surrounding Japan mainly at two levels, the state level and the system level. However, the current situation is influenced not only by state and system level factors, but also by individual level factors, such as fear, desire, and self-esteem. I categorize these factors as "nationalism" in this paper.

Is this nationalism a temporary phenomenon? Japanese observers argue that the reasons why citizens of the Republic of Korea dislike Japan include Confucianism, egoism, biased education, and the like.²⁷ As for China, although Japan has apologized many times, the history issue is as volatile as ever. Japanese observers blame this on Beijing's "patriotic education" campaign, which began in 1994.²⁸ The former Japanese ambassador to China, Uichiro Niwa, said in a lecture at Nagoya University that it will take more than 40 years for the two countries to repair their relationship over the Senkaku Islands.²⁹ Thus, nationalism is not likely to be a temporary phenomenon.

Because of geographical proximity, a "security dilemma" could easily occur in the area surrounding Japan. Independent action taken by one state to increase its security may make other states feel less secure. The actions of the threatened states to improve their security may raise fears among their neighbors. Japan should plan its next NDPG on the geostrategic checkerboard fully aware of these facts.

A Recommended New NDPG for Japan – the 2010 NDPG + α

The 2010 NDPG came out with the "Dynamic Defense Force," based on the power balance in the Asian-Pacific region and the gray-zone disputes surrounding Japan. This concept set Japan's future course, and it has proved to be an appropriate course in light of the Great East Japan Earthquake and current gray-zone disputes. However, the current elevation of nationalism inside and outside of Japan makes the security environment more serious and complicated, as discussed above. In order to deal with this situation, it is necessary to add additional ends, ways, and means to the 2010 NDPG.

Ends and Ways: Redefine the SDF's Mission

Japan does not have a national security strategy that is explicitly stipulated in a document. This doesn't mean that Japan has no security strategy. Richard J. Samuels admired Japan's strategy: "During the 1980s and 1990s, other analysts-I was one of them-were impressed by Japan's 'comprehensive security' strategy, which creatively combined economic and technological capabilities with a low-cost military posture."³⁰ However, this sometimes caused disunity between ministries' individual programs, or an inability to promote effective foreign and security policies,³¹ because Japan's national interests are not clear. Peace and prosperity are fully recognized as Japan's national interests, but there is no consensus over the third interest, a sense of values or, in other words, norms of national identity.

The 2010 NDPG tried to expand the objectives of Japan's security policy. In addition to two long-standing objectives, "to prevent any threat from directly reaching Japan and to eliminate external threats that have reached it so as to minimize the ensuing damage," and "to prevent threats from emerging by further stabilizing the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region," the 2010 NDPG added a third objective, "to contribute to creating global peace and stability and secure human security." While the first and second objectives have clear purposes, such as securing the peace and security of Japan and ensuring Japan's security and prosperity, the third objective's purpose is obscure because Japan has not identified the third national interest that relates to that objective.

In order to deal with this situation, Japan should consider a sense of values as the third national interest. According to Richard J. Samuels, this attempt is repeated in the history of modern Japanese security policy. Kanehara Nobukatsu, the political

minister at the Japanese embassy in Washington, explained in 2006 that Japan must remake its strategy from one characterized by passive pacifism to one of active pacifism. Japan, he insists, must transform itself from an economic superpower to a political superpower in order to gain the respect of the rest of the world, and it must do so on its own terms and at its own pace.³² In his inaugural policy address to the Diet in September 2006, Abe Shinzo argued that Japan must be “trusted, respected, and loved in the world.”³³ Today, a new strategy based on Japan’s values is inevitable under the current security environment.

As the national interests are expanded, Japan should redefine the SDF’s mission in order to provide the strategic concept (ways) and resources (means) to attain the revised ends. The main mission of the SDF is to defend Japan against direct and indirect aggression in order to ensure the peace and independence of Japan as well as to maintain national security. In addition, the secondary missions are preservation of public order, activities in response to situations in areas surrounding Japan, and international peace cooperation activities.³⁴ The international peace cooperation activities were stipulated as one of the primary missions of the SDF in 2007. This was based on the notion that because of the current security environment, the peace and security of the international community is considered to be closely linked to the peace and security of Japan.³⁵ Thus, the purpose of the international peace cooperation activities is to achieve the first national interest, “the peace of Japan.” However, many requests for peacekeeping contingents are for places far from Japan, and it is difficult to explain the influence of participating in these missions on the peace of Japan. This is one of the reasons that it is difficult to expand Japanese participation in peace

cooperation activities. However, the reasons for dispatching Japanese peacekeeping forces have gradually changed and are now generally accepted by the Japanese people. In January 2010, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama instructed the first contingent to MINISTAH (United Nations Stabilization in Haiti) that he wanted them to prove that Japan is a country that protects life in the world.³⁶ In January 2012, the Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda instructed the first contingent to UNMISS (United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan) that he wanted them to meet expectations from the nation of South Sudan and the global community by all means. In addition, he pointed out that this was the first step to show the feeling of thanks to the global community for support given in response to the East Japan Great Earthquake.³⁷

In the new NDPG, Japan should redefine the SDF's mission to include "a sense of values," and expand the mission in order to show our active pacifism. This is the new role for the SDF by which Japan can cope with the checkerboard geostrategic pattern security environment surrounding the nation, and it does not require amendment to the Constitution.

Show the Soft Power

Due to the deterioration of the security environment surrounding Japan, cries for ensuring the security of the sea and air space surrounding the nation become louder day by day. The 2010 NDPG will reinforce major equipment of the Maritime Self-Defense Force, such as destroyers, submarines, and assets for ballistic missile defense. The preparation of the national budget for FY 2013, which was drawn up by the new Abe government, has also attached importance to major equipment improvement for the Maritime Self-Defense Force and Air Self-Defense Force. It is important to maintain this essential hard power, but we also have to be careful not to

generate an unnecessary security dilemma with arms races and tension. Japan should strengthen not only its hard power, but also its soft power as a way to bolster mutual understanding with other countries.

To ensure peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, the Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Forces have conducted various defense cooperation activities and exchanges with other countries, especially with surrounding countries. They are very important for Japan's security and very relevant in the face of the "gray-zone" disputes supported by nationalism involving these countries. Thus, Japan should promote more understanding with the surrounding countries of its neighboring checkerboard and work to influence these countries in ways that will reduce tensions and ameliorate the "gray-zone" disputes.

Participation in International Cooperation Activities is one of the most important activities for the SDF to exercise its soft power. SDF is a unique organization that maintains strict discipline and is trusted by more than 90 percent of citizens even under Constitutional limitations. The SDF has successfully gained good evaluations and has positively influenced other countries with every mission it has under-taken. This organization is the most precious asset for Japan to show its soft power.

International Cooperation Activities were stipulated as a primary mission in 2007, and the SDF has been preparing various structures to undertake international peace cooperation activities proactively. On the other hand, Japan's participation in UN peacekeeping operations has not been satisfactory. Japan has made the decision as to whether or not to dispatch forces to UN peacekeeping operations according to Five Principles as follows:

- Agreement on a cease-fire shall have been reached among the parties to the armed conflict
- Consent for the undertaking of UN peacekeeping operations as well as Japan's participation in such operations has been obtained from the host countries as well as the parties to armed conflict.
- The operations shall strictly maintain impartiality, not favoring any of the parties to armed conflict.
- Should any of the requirements in the above mentioned guidelines cease to be satisfied, the Government of Japan may withdraw its contingents or personnel.
- The use of weapons shall be limited to the minimum necessary to protect personnel's lives.

However, recent UN peacekeeping operations have changed from traditional operations that cope with inter-state conflicts to large-scale, multi-functional operations that respond to conflicts with non-state actors and activities beyond the scope of the Five Principles. In addition, there are gaps between the principles and international standards. Because of this gap, especially for security reasons, Japan has judged that it is difficult to assure the safety of its personnel and decided to withdraw this January its contingent from the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), which was established in the Golan Heights following the agreed ceasefire between the Israeli and Syrian forces.³⁸

In order to participate in International Cooperation Activities proactively, in addition to redefining the SDF's mission, it is necessary to review the Five Principles to

meet international standards. Moreover, the use of weapons authorized by the International Peace Cooperation Law is different from the UN standards. This use is limited to self-defense only and excludes the protection of other nations' personnel in the mission or resistance to attempts by forceful means to prevent the peacekeeping operation from discharging its duties under the mandate of the Security Council.

In the new NDPG, Japan should seriously discuss how to build a national consensus on how to play an important role in International Cooperation Activities and should review the Five Principles and International Peace Cooperation Law in order to insure that Japan's participation in peacekeeping operations is more effective and consistent with the demonstration of Japan's values.

Combine the Dynamic Defense Force with the Basic Defense Force Concept

The 2010 NDPG described the security environment surrounding Japan as one in which there are a growing number of gray-zone disputes that were unlikely to escalate into wars as mentioned before. Therefore, the 2010 NDPG prescribed that Japan would strengthen its defense forces based on the Dynamic Defense Forces concept and ensure information supremacy through continuous intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities (ISR) in the country and surrounding areas. On the other hand, to reduce costs the 2010 NDPG called for maintaining a minimum necessary level of preparations against full-scale invasion and the reduction of manpower and some major equipment, such as tanks, howitzers, and combat aircraft based on the assumption that "gray-zone" disputes would not escalate into war.

However, the recent territorial disputes over the Senkaku Islands indicate that some of the assumptions of the 2010 NDPG should be reconsidered, especially the assumption that gray-zone disputes will not escalate into wars should be reconsidered.

Gray-zone disputes, especially territorial issues, arise from the passions of nationalism and thus have the possibility of escalating into wars in spite of the original intentions of the nations concerned. In addition, it is difficult to manage those issues by continuous ISR without visible military power. It is true that Japan should have information supremacy, but ISR cannot offset the need for visible military power.

In the new NDPG, Japan should evaluate the security environment critically and combine the Dynamic Defense Force with the Basic Defense Concept with sufficient military capability to deter disputes that could escalate into war. Japan's future defense forces should acquire dynamism to effectively respond to various contingencies, with a balanced set of functions, including ISR, but also the capability of force projection, communication, and fire power for the defense of Japan. In other words, Japan's future defense should maintain an appropriate balance between various current contingencies and a potential full-scale invasion, because the security environment surrounding Japan is hard to foresee and Japan must not only prevent the "gray-zone" disputes from escalating into war, but also be capable of dealing with the possibility of unintended escalation.

Conclusion

On January 28, 2013, Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo delivered his first policy speech in the first regular session of the Diet since he returned to power in December 2012. He said the security situation of Japan is becoming more serious and that Japan's government will firmly protect the safety of the Japanese people and territories. He also said Japan will pursue "value diplomacy," which is based on the values of freedom, democracy, and human rights.³⁹ Furthermore, he has already announced that Japan will modify its National Defense Program Guidelines and initiate

a midterm defense program to bolster the country's defensive capabilities by the end of 2013. On January 29, 2013, Japan's Cabinet endorsed a general budget that will increase defense spending for the first time in 11 years. The 52.5 billion yen (546 million dollar) in proposed defense spending, up 0.8 percent from last year, is partly aimed at the reinforcement of Japan's coastal and marine surveillance around the islands.⁴⁰ This is a small but welcome change to Japan's security. Needless to say, Japan should assure sufficient funding to achieve the next NDPG. Thus, to some extent, the recommendations of this paper (written before Prime Minister Abe took office) are already being implemented.

Gray-zone disputes are increasing in severity, and a security dilemma could easily occur in the area surrounding Japan. Japan has to deal with this incompatible situation. Prime Minister Abe's "value diplomacy," is a good orientation to deal with the situation. The next NDPG should make the SDF's roles in this value diplomacy clear. Participation in International Cooperation Activities will be an increasingly important role for the SDF to demonstrate Japan's value.

On the other hand, it is essential to build up the necessary level of SDF capabilities compared to those of surrounding countries in order to deter disputes that could escalate into war. To do that, the SDF should combine the Dynamic Defense Force concept with the Basic Defense Force approach, and maintain a balanced posture with regard to major equipment.

Endnotes

¹ Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2007), 45.

² Government of Japan, *National Defense Program Guidelines, FY2011 and beyond* (Tokyo: the Security Council, 2010), sec II.

³ Article 9: “Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.”

“In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.”

⁴ Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2011* (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 2011), 139.

⁵ “Basic Policy lays down the following four items as a basic policy for achieving the objectives.

- Support the activities of the United Nations, cooperate with other nations, and aim to achieve world peace.
- Establish the foundation necessary to ensure a stable a quality of life for the people, boost nationalism, and guarantee the nation’s safety.
- Progressively develop efficient national defense capabilities to necessary limit for self-defense in accordance with national power and circumstances.
- Deal with foreign invasions of Japan based on security arrangements formed with the United States until the United Nations becomes able to effectively prevent said threats.”

⁶ The Three Non-Nuclear Principles are that Japan: “will not possess nuclear weapons, will not produce nuclear weapons, and will not allow nuclear weapons into Japan.”

⁷ Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2011* (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 2011), 141.

⁸ The factors considered effective and retained are as follows: “1) Japanese defense forces should not directly counter military threats, and 2) in order to forestall and prevent invasions, Japan should maintain a defense force that takes into considerations the strategic environment and geographic characteristics.”

⁹ Government of Japan, *National Defense Program Guidelines, FY2005 and beyond* (Tokyo: the Security Council, 2004), sec II.

¹⁰ Ministry of Finance, *Nihonno Zaisei to Boueiryoku no Seibi*, April, 2010, <http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/shin-ampoboueie2010/dai6/siryoku2.pdf>, (accessed December 10, 2012).

¹¹ Government of Japan, *National Defense Program Guidelines, FY2011 and beyond* (Tokyo: the Security Council, 2010), sec III.

¹² Government of Japan, *National Defense Program Guidelines, FY2005 and beyond* (Tokyo: the Security Council, 2004), sec III.

¹³ Government of Japan, *National Defense Program Guidelines, FY2011 and beyond* (Tokyo: the Security Council, 2010), sec IV.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ The Council on Security and Defense Capabilities, *The Council on Security and Defense Capabilities Report* (Tokyo, the Cabinet Secretariat, August 2009), 66.

¹⁶ Government of Japan, *National Defense Program Guidelines, FY2011 and beyond* (Tokyo: the Security Council, 2010), sec V.

¹⁷ Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2011* (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 2011), 2.

¹⁸ Ministry of Defense, *Lessons in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake*, November 2012, <http://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/defense/saigai/tohokuoki/index.html>, (accessed December 10, 2012).

¹⁹ Public Relations Office of Cabinet Office, *Public Opinion Survey on the Self-Defense Forces and Defense Issues*, January 2012, <http://www8.cao.go.jp/survey/index.html>, (accessed December 10, 2012)

²⁰ Mainichi Shimbun Advertising Division Cyber Space, Data Flash 031, <http://macs.mainich.co.jp/space/web031/02.html>, (accessed December 10, 2012)

²¹ Russia calls the four islands of the Northern Territories and the Kuril Islands “Kuril” Islands.

²² Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2011* (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 2012), 54.

²³ Government of Japan, *National Defense Program Guidelines, FY2011 and beyond* (Tokyo: the Security Council, 2010), sec IV.

²⁴ Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy, October 2012, <http://www8.cao.go.jp/survey/index.html>, (accessed December 10, 2012)

²⁵ BBC World Service, POLL, May 2012, http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/may12/BBCVals_May12_rpt.pdf, (accessed December 10, 2012)

²⁶ Joseph S. Nye, Jr. and David A. Welch, *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation* (Indiana, Crawfordsville, Pearson, 2011), 47.

²⁷ Shoiti Watanabe and Ko Bunyu, “Sekaiju de Kirawareru Kankokujin to Shinajin,” *Will*, November 1, 2012, 44-55.; Motohiko Izawa, “Kankokujinwa Naze Nihonjinwonikumunoka,” *Will*, November 1, 2012, 46-62.

²⁸ Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2007), 138.

²⁹ Jiji Press, October 20, 2012, <http://www.jiji.com/jc/zc?k=201210/2012102000158> (accessed December 12, 2012).

³⁰ Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2007), 3.

³¹ The Council on Security and Defense Capabilities, *The Council on Security and Defense Capabilities Report* (Tokyo, the Cabinet Secretariat, August 2009), 3.

³² Richard J. Samuels, *Securing Japan* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2007), 187.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Self-Defense Forces Law, art. 3.

³⁵ Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2011* (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 2012), 266.

³⁶ Kyodo Tsushin, February 6, 2010, <http://www.47news.jp/feature/kyodo/seikenkoutai/2010/02/post-1813.html> (accessed December 12, 2012).

³⁷ BoueiNews.com, January 15, 2012, http://www.boueinews.com/.../20120115_4.html (accessed December 12, 2012).

³⁸ Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters, Cabinet Office Home Page, <http://www.pko.go.jp/index.html> (accessed January 20, 2013).

³⁹ Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet Home Page, <http://www.kantei.go.jp/> (accessed January 31, 2013).

⁴⁰ Ministry of Defense Home Page, <http://www.mod.go.jp/index.html>, (accessed January 31, 2013).